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My Own Private Library: A Peek Inside the Personal Library of a Librarian

Dusty Gres

Ohoop Regional Library System, gresd@ohoopelibrary.org

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My Own PRIVATE LIBRARY

A peek inside the personal library of a librarian

by Dusty Gres

My personal library collection began the Christmas I was 8 years old. Money was tight, but my father had found an old china cabinet in someone's trash and gone to junk shops, used bookstores, even the city dump, collecting books. What a gift! My own bookcase full of books — all kinds: *Alice in Wonderland*, *Little Women*, *Tom Sawyer*, *Robinson Crusoe*, *Last of the Mohicans*, *Prisoner of Zenda* and *Zotz*; oldies but goodies — *Cuckoo Clock*, *Penrod*, *Water-babies*, *Mother West Wind*, even a copy of *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights* that I am sure my father did not know was unabridged! Not all, but some are still on my bookshelves today.

Over the years my library has grown, sometimes to unmanageable proportions. I've added, weeded, boxed and moved what seemed like the Library of Congress at times. Marrying another book collector didn't help. We made a rule: No book was added to our home library if it could be checked out from the public library. Except for those we already owned, or really wanted because they were special, or were given to us, or wanted to read again; there is an exception to every rule.

My library is really a collection of collections. In an old bookcase, not quite what my father gave me years ago but as close as I could find, there are: the books from that long-ago Christmas gift, my beloved *Freddy the Pig* books (the first books I bought with my own money), my Andre Norton collection — begun when I was a teenager and added to throughout the years, mostly paperbacks, but all signed by the great lady when I was privileged to be her librarian — and my father's pulp fiction collection — Tarzan rubs elbows with Sam Spade.

On the "library shelves," handmade oak shelving I rescued from a library that was being renovated, are ranged my state fiction collection: beginning with my

Florida childhood — *The Pink Motel*, *Up a Crooked River*, *Strawberry Girl*, *The Lion's Paw* by Robb White (one of the finest children's adventure stories ever written), *The Barefoot Mailman*, *Alas Babylon*, *If Nothin' Don't Happen*, *A Land Remembered*. I've added Georgia titles and Georgia authors I've met at CSAC, GLA/COMO and who have visited my library in the years I've been here, including — to come full circle — books by Bailey White and Robb White, Jr.

My fairy and folktale collection: All the Andrew Lang's plus stories from many countries and regions. (Have you read some of those Japanese tales? They will make your skin crawl!)

My reference collection: Dictionaries (I favor *Webster's 2nd Unabridged*), history books, encyclopedias, poetry, literature, and every animal, vegetable or mineral identification book and "living off the land" book I can find. I cannot bear to see a flower, tree, animal, (etc.) that I can't identify; I think it's the reference librarian gene. Plus, I'm a child of the '60s, *The Whole Earth Catalog(s)*. The "Classics Collection" — not sure what else to call it. I am probably one of the last human beings on the planet to have voluntarily taken Latin, years of Latin. I have quite a few books I have enjoyed reading through the years, from *Winnie Ille Pu* to *Harrius Potter et Philosophi Lapis*.

There is my husband's collection: Books about boats — building them, running them, knots, rigging, sailing, the ocean, seamanship. If it exists and it has to do with water, he's tried to collect it (the library rule has been invoked many times). He's got *Carry On, Mr. Bowditch* right next to *Bowditch's American Practical Navigator*, all those interminable Time-Life series, the works of Robb White and Randy Wayne White, *Scuffy the Tugboat*,

Continued on page 32

Warm Springs by David M. Burke, Jr. and Odie A. Burke (Arcadia Publishing, 2005; ISBN 0-7385-4199-0, \$19.99). This pictorial work featuring Warm Springs, Georgia, located in the west central part of the state, features over 200 photographs. The work begins with an explanation of the geology of the area that causes the warm springs to exist. There is some discussion of the early history of the locale from the 1800s through the early 1920s when the area was primarily a vacation spot for the well-to-do. The majority of the book, however, emphasizes the years from 1924 to 1945 when Franklin Delano Roosevelt was active in Warm Springs. It touches upon the ostracism suffered by polio victims—who were not allowed to ride in passenger cars on trains and feared to be contagious when bathing in a shared pool—and the great changes that Roosevelt affected for them. He caused Warm Springs to become a haven for those suffering from polio and other paralyses, spending two-thirds of his fortune to purchase property and buildings in the area. He hired physical therapists and had constructed pools, living quarters, a hydrotherapy center, and more. Roosevelt incorporated the March of Dimes that eventually funded the vaccine for polio. Many photographs show Roosevelt in relaxed settings, among polio victims, children, and ordinary townspeople. The narrative submits that it was during his stay in Warm Springs that Roosevelt came to understand the plight of the rural poor. Due to that understanding, he implemented the Rural Electrification Administration, the Federal Deposit Insurance Corporation, the Tennessee Valley Authority, and the Civilian Conservation Corps, all of which helped bring the country out of the Great Depression. This volume belongs in any library with a focus on Georgia, social history, political science, and/or Franklin Delano Roosevelt. ►►

— Reviewed by **Mary-Frances Panettiere**
Georgia Institute of Technology



JUVENILE LITERATURE

Yumion series by Rhonda Frost Petty, illustrated by Pam Alexander (Be Sweet

Publications: **The Onion Ambassador**, 2001; ISBN: 0-9709105-0-9, \$16.00;

Yumion Goes to the City, 2002; ISBN: 0-9709105-1-7, \$16.00; **Yumion's Mountain Holidays**, 2004; ISBN: 0-9709105-2-5, \$16.00; **Sails, Pails, and Alligator Tales**, 2005; ISBN: 0-9709105-6-8, \$16.00).



Vidalia, Georgia, was made famous years ago for its unique variety of onion. Now the city is entering the spotlight again as the birthplace of another onion variety—the walking, talking kind. Meet Georgia's newest ambassador, Yumion, the lovable adventurer whose mission above all is to remind everyone to "Be Sweet." In this four-volume series, Yumion, the Onion Ambassador, travels all over Georgia learning about all that this great state has to offer. Yumion's travels take him from the fields of Vidalia to the state capital in Atlanta. From there he ventures to the Mountains and then out to the coast, ending up in the great Okefenokee Swamp. Readers of this series will not only learn about Georgia's great sites, but also learn a bit about some famous personalities, such as President Jimmy Carter and Zell Miller. The rhyming text and engaging illustrations make this series an excellent choice for reading aloud to any audience, young or old. Pam Alexander and Rhonda Frost Petty have compiled an excellent series of tales that will be useful to students, teachers, librarians, and even tourism committees throughout the state of Georgia. After reading these adventures, one wonders, where will Yumion go next? ►►

— Reviewed by **Sandy Hester**
Fitzgerald-Ben Hill County Library

My Own Private Library

Continued from page 4

Coast Guard tugboat regulations, and books by and about sailors from Richard Henry Dana and Captain Bligh to Linda Greenlaw. One entire wall of them on old hatch boards from a freighter. Of course, it does jazz up the place — the last thing sitting on those hatch boards (before

his books) was a Mercedes!

Of my entire life of book collecting, I am having the most fun now. I have started a collection for our granddaughter — she has her own bookcase, and I am getting all those books that a librarian-grandparent loves to read to children and loves

children to read. So far I haven't invoked the library rule. I hope that 50 years from now the books will remind her of her grandmother, as my father's books remind me of his love for me and for reading. ►►

Dusty Gres is director of the Ohoopee Regional Library System in Vidalia.